GOALIE-ORIENTED
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LEADER OF THE PACK
ANNE RICE FORSAKES VAMPIRES FOR WEREWOLVES {page 8}

IN TRANSIT
LTC CALLS FOR A NATIONAL VISION
{page 3}

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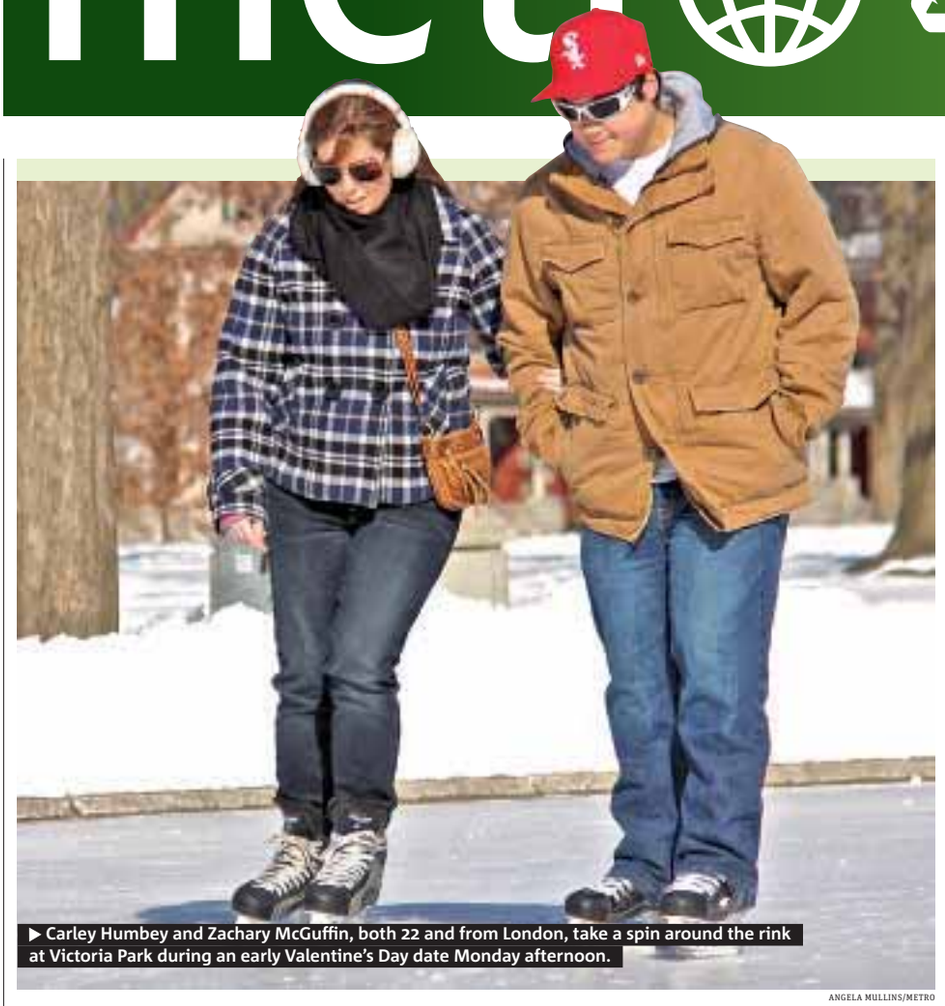

▶ Carley Humbey and Zachary McGuffin, both 22 and from London, take a spin around the rink at Victoria Park during an early Valentine's Day date Monday afternoon.

ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

Love is in the air … and on the ice

With both scheduled to work on Tuesday, Humbey and McGuffin decided to celebrate the holiday early. Skating is one of their favourite things to do together. For a relationship expert's tips on making your Valentine's Day extra-special, turn to page 4.

Smoking ban inches ahead

▶ Ban in several public areas proposed by health unit nixed by city committee

ANGELA MULLINS
@METRONEWS.CA

60 The number of Ontario municipalities with smoking bans in public places.
Source: Middlesex-London Health Unit

Restaurant and bar patios could be yanked from a list of places that would be subject to a smoking ban.

Members of city council's community services committee voted Monday to have administrators report back on banning smoking at sports fields, playgrounds, swimming pools, splash pads and public gardens.

The measure — which must be approved by full council — is less stringent than the approach approved in November by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. Its proposal includes outdoor seating areas and public recreation areas such as parks and trails.

Councillors showed strong support for keeping bar and restaurant patios — many of which were built when smoking was banned in workplaces — out of an expanded smoking ban.

"For us to take patios away, I honestly believe a lot of them will go under," Coun. Bill Armstrong said.

But a ban on smoking in playgrounds and swimming pools would protect children, Armstrong and others said.

Coun. Stephen Orser urged city politicians to stay out of the debate all together. "This is another example of something that should be for the province of Ontario to decide," he said. "We should send a message to the province: Take control of this situation."

The health unit has presented councillors with four options regulating smoking. Each presents a different combination of areas that would be affected.

The most broad-sweeping option would see smoking banned in all outdoor areas. The proposal with the least impact would ban smoking only within nine metres of some public spaces, including workplaces.

tea brownies sushi coffee international treats bagels jam pasta valentine wine dinner flowers jewelry valentine restaurants chocolates giftware cards candles
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Happy Valentine's Day

Charges filed in January arsons

Two London men have been arrested in a series of massage-parlour arsons.

David Hewlett-Weiler, 28, and Michael Morrison, 21, are facing a slew of charges including throwing explosives and the intention of damaging property after fires Jan. 5 and Jan. 8 at Blue Lagoon II (1180 Oxford St. E.) and Virginia's Adult Massage & Spa (125 Clarke Rd.)

Blue Lagoon was set ablaze about 4:30 a.m. Jan. 5 and again on Jan. 8, causing a combined $151,250 in damage. A Jan. 8 arson at Virginia's caused about $25,000 worth of damage.

Despite speculation that the fires were tied to organized crime, Hewlett-Weiler and Morrison are not members of street or biker gangs, Const. Dennis Rivest said Monday.

Police are continuing to investigate whether the men have ties to such groups, Rivest said.

Charges have not been filed in a Jan. 8 arson at Famous Flesh Gordon's strip club (2190 Dundas St. E.).

The club is owned by a reportedly high-ranking member of London's Hells Angels chapter, but police have said there's no proof that the massage parlours are tied to the gang.

Anyone with information about the blazes is asked to call 519-661-5670 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477. ANGELA MULLINS

For more local news, visit metronews.ca/london

Two men arrested

- **David Hewlett-Weiler, charged with** three counts of arson/fire or explosion causing property damage and three counts of throwing explosives with the intention of damaging property.
- **Michael Morrison, charged with** one count of arson/fire or explosion causing property damage and one count of throwing an explosive with the intention of damaging property.

Catching hold of a vision

LTC lobbies council for help in generating national public-transit strategy ◐ Vision plan touches on everything from stable funding to building rapid-transit networks

ANGELA MULLINS
@METRONEWS.CA

The London Transit Commission is trying to get on the bus. The national-transit-strategy bus, that is.

Larry Ducharme, general manager of the LTC, won support Monday from a city committee for a 27-point plan dubbed Transit Vision 2040. He — and others in positions like his across the country — are asking municipalities to endorse the vision with hopes that backing will lead to more clout when lobbying for a federal public-transit policy.

The full city council still must sign off on Ducharme's request. If it does, London will join about 10 other cities that have already OK'd the idea.

Developed by the Canadian Urban Transit Association, Vision 2040 focuses on six main themes that drive toward one goal.

"It really talks about looking at how Canada will grow as an urban country — and giving urban areas (access to good public transit)," Ducharme said.

Many of the things included in the plan are already factored into long-term planning done by the LTC and the city, Ducharme said. But the grander transit vision plan is a chance for communities across the country to send the same message.

Lobbying for such a strategy has happened before, Ducharme said, but "we weren't all singing from the same song sheet."

Transit Vision 2040 "makes our sales pitch a lot easier," he said.

Vision for 2040

Six major themes:

- Putting transit at the centre of communities.
- Revolutionizing service.
- Focusing on customers.
- Making transit "greener."
- Ensuring financial health.
- Strengthening knowledge and practice.

You can read the full vision plan at cutaactu.ca.

ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

▶ People board a London Transit Commission bus Monday afternoon along Wellington Road. City councillors have been asked to support a vision plan that LTC officials say will help them lobby for a national transit strategy.

All-day JK, SK will stay, finance minister says

THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

Ontario will keep all-day kindergarten despite high-placed advice that the program should be scrapped. Finance Minister Dwight Duncan, shown right, made the commitment Monday following a speech on how to wrestle the province's multi-billion-dollar deficit. Duncan says the Drummond report will recommend closing all-day kindergarten — but the finance minister says they won't do it. THE CANADIAN PRESS

$200M
Amount Finance Minister Dwight Duncan expects the sale of the LCBO's headquarters property to generate for the province.

News in brief

Sewer repairs

WEEK-LONG DISRUPTION. Sewer repairs at Adelaide Street and Dufferin Avenue begin Tuesday morning. Both northbound lanes will be closed as of 9 a.m. Tuesday from Queens Avenue to Central Avenue. METRO

CAW, Caterpillar close in on deal

MEETINGS. The saga of severance for unionized workers at the shuttered Electro-Motive Diesel plant may be nearing its end. CAW Local 27 president Tim Carrie says the union and company hope to have something concrete this week. He said negotiations have been progressing. AM980/AM980.CA

1 news

A study has revealed that the supply of donated organs has remained relatively flat since 2006. Scan code for story.

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3 The codes will direct your mobile browser to **m.metronews.ca**

On the web at metronews.ca

The U.S. markets have been sizzling in the early days of 2012, so why are retail investors still gloomy? Allan Small explains at metronews.ca/investing

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Houser reflects on Knights record

GEOFFREY MCMURRAY/FOR METRO

▶ Knights goalie Michael Houser

Goalie hopes to keep adding to his regular-season wins record 86 wins for the Wexford, Pa., native

It's one thing to get a standing ovation from your fans, quite another to get one from your peers.

"They (teammates and coaches) congratulated me afterwards — they gave me a standing ovation in the dressing room as well," Knights goalie Michael Houser said about setting the team mark for regular-season wins Friday.

"I've had lots of support here, playing alongside so many great players here over the past three years."

Knights captain Jarred Tinordi was all praise for Houser.

"We know the amount of work he puts in both on and off the ice; the number of times he bails us out of tough games, so we couldn't be happier for him," said Tinordi. "We wanted him to get (the record) really bad, so we tried to play hard in front of him."

When asked where he sees the record going, Houser hopes win number 100 is not out of reach.

"It would be great, obviously," he said. "We've got about 15-16 games left this year. Hopefully, we can win all of them and we'll see where it goes from there."

Tinordi says that the team is putting in a lot of effort as the playoffs draw closer, with an eye towards a lengthy post-season run.

"There are a lot of things to work on from now until then, but (the Memorial Cup) is in the back of our minds," he said. "We want to win every game and make a strong push for the playoffs. It'd be great to bring another Memorial Cup for London."

VICTOR MARIO KAISAR

129th game

▶ Sunday's 4-3 win over Kitchener was Houser's 129th regular-season game as a Knight.

Expert offers tips on making your relationship work

ANGELA MULLINS
@METRONEWS.CA

It's here. That special day dedicated to loving, coupling and, all too often, proving your bravado in each is back again.

We're talking about Valentine's Day, folks. The big Feb. 14. The frenzied climax to 364 days worth of relationship-testing moments or searching for the right mate.

Sound a bit over the top? Yeah, with practically every card store, candy store and flower shop brimming over with expressions of ecstasy, it's easy to get carried away.

But pull in the reins, says London's Allison Menegoni. Valentine's Day isn't and shouldn't be a "barometer" for the strength of your relationship, said Menegoni, owner of Aspenworks Unlimited, a firm that provides life coaching for women and couples.

"In an ideal relationship, every day should be Valentine's Day, but it doesn't work out that way," she said. "Valentine's Day ends up becoming this … pinnacle day to hang your hopes on."

That, Menegoni said, is where the holiday gets dangerous.

She offered Metro readers a few tips for avoiding disappointment, celebrating and, perhaps most importantly, waking up with a stronger relationship on Wednesday.

Know your partner

If your sweetie-pie isn't the overly demonstrative type, don't expect to be lathered with affection just because the calendar hits Feb. 14. Such expectations can lead to letdowns and resentment, Menegoni said.

Observe

Whether you've been together for weeks or decades, it's important to mark the day of love. All observations are relative, so what's right for others may not be right for you and your honey. A surprise getaway or special evening out could do the trick. So could a stroll through the park, a little handholding or picking up one of your partner's household chores.

"Valentine's Day is all about celebrating what the two of you enjoy doing together."
LIFE COACH ALLISON MENEGONI
OWNER OF ASPENWORKS UNLIMITED IN LONDON

Say what you mean

Roses are beautiful and chocolate is tasty. But, sometimes, "nothing can equal the power of words." Find a gift that's personal, then pair it with the perfect card.

Teachers' union adds voice to Wi-Fi concerns

An Ontario teachers' union is calling for an end to new Wi-Fi setups in the province's 1,400-plus Catholic schools.

The Ontario English Catholic Teacher's Association says computers in all new schools should be hardwired instead of setting up wireless networks.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lightning set for game

The London Lightning and the Sunshine Foundation are playing a game for local children living with severe physical disabilities or life-threatening illnesses on Thursday.

METRO

HANDOUT

Contest aims to provide ideal occupation

Capstone Career Solutions Inc. and AM980 will be awarding four Londoners with a marketing strategy to help them get their ideal occupation. For full contest details, visit the contests page on am980.ca.

METRO

For more local news, visit metronews.ca/london

U.S. and Canada at odds over War of 1812

War less crucial to Americans than to Canadians: Poll
Canada to spend $28M on bicentennial this year

The War of 1812 may be one of the world's oddest conflicts, if only because both sides are confident they won.

A new survey suggests Canadians and Americans have vastly divergent attitudes toward the border war that broke out in 1812 and bumbled along for three years.

Americans see it as a war that produced their national anthem. Canadians see it as a war that saved them from assimilation.

During the war, the Americans repeatedly tried to invade and were repeatedly repulsed by often-outnumbered mixes of British redcoats, Canadian militia and aboriginal allies.

The Ipsos Reid poll conducted for the Historica Dominion Institute for the bicentennial of the war found that 54 per cent of Canadians felt the most significant outcome was that the invaders were turned back.

Americans had a dramatically different take. For a third of them, the outcome was the Star Spangled Banner. Its words were written by Francis Scott Key after watching a British naval bombardment of Baltimore's Fort McHenry in September 1814. A plurality of 36 per cent saw no significant outcome at all.

John Wright of Ipsos Reid said the war doesn't stand out for Americans because they see other, much bigger watersheds.

"The War of Independence is their touchstone for their nationhood," he said. "Ours seems to have been a gradual one."

While some might point to 1812 as a key point on the way to nationhood, others might look at Vimy Ridge, or the patriation of the Constitution.

"This is a touchstone towards Confederation, it's an important part of the story of Canada," he added.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

What we think

- **When defining the Canadian identity,** 53 per cent of poll respondents picked universal health care, while 25 per cent picked winning the War of 1812.
- **If Canada had not won the war,** 60 per cent of said they wouldn't want to share the American political system, 18 per cent said they didn't want American gun laws and six per cent said they didn't want to share citizenship with Snooki from Jersey Shore.
- **More than 80 per cent** on both sides of the border agreed that the war was a significant part of the history and about the same agreed it should be commemorated.

DAVE CHIDLEY/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ British soldiers fire their muskets at the American forces during a restaging of a War of 1812 skirmish between American and British forces near an actual battle site west of London, Ont., on May 5, 2007. A new survey suggests Canadians and Americans have vastly divergent attitudes toward the border war that broke out in 1812.

MARTIAL TREZZINI/KEYSTONE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Navi Pillay, UN high commissioner for human rights, speaks about Tunisia and Egypt at the UN headquarters in Geneva on Feb. 4.

Crimes against humanity on rise in Syria: UN chief

The UN human rights chief says the scale of abuses by the Syrian government indicates that crimes against humanity have taken place since last March and are continuing.

Navi Pillay told the General Assembly on Monday that credible reports indicate that more than 5,400 people were killed last year, and that the number of dead and injured continues to rise every day.

She expressed serious concern that the deliberate stirring of sectarian tensions may plunge Syria into civil war.

Pillay accused the Syrian government of using the Security Council's recent failure to condemn its crackdown on protesters "to crush dissent with overwhelming force."

She echoed Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's warning that council inaction must not be used as a licence to kill.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rebels hold strong in Syria

Syrian rebels repelled a push Monday by government tanks into a central town held by forces fighting President Bashar Assad's regime in an 11-month conflict that looks increasingly like a civil war.

The military pressed its offensive on Rastan a day after the regime rejected Arab League calls for the UN to create a peacekeeping force in Syria and for an end to the violent crackdown on dissent. Damascus called the League initiative "a flagrant interference in (Syria's) internal affairs and an infringement upon national sovereignty."

With diplomatic efforts bogged down, the conflict is resembling a civil war, with army defectors clashing almost daily with soldiers. The rebels have taken control of small swathes of territory in central Homs province, where Rastan is located, and the northwestern province of Idlib, which borders Turkey.

The Britain-based activist group Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least three government soldiers were killed in the attempt to storm Rastan, which has been held by the rebels since late January.

Rastan, home to some 50,000 people, was one of the first areas in Syria where people took up arms to fight the regime.

The uprising began last March as mostly peaceful protests against Assad's authoritarian rule, but has become more militarized in the face of the brutal military crackdown.

Assad's bloody crackdown on the opposition has left Syria almost completely isolated internationally, except for one key ally — Russia.

China and Russia outraged the U.S. and many Arab countries earlier this month when they delivered a double veto to block a U.N. Security resolution calling on Assad to leave power.

At the forefront of regional efforts to end the crisis, the 22-nation Arab League called for the Security Council to create a joint Arab-U.N. peacekeeping force and urged Arab states to sever all diplomatic contact with Damascus.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOHAMMED ZAATARI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Clerics gesture and chant religious slogans during a demonstration against the Syrian regime in Sidon, Lebanon, on Sunday.

The UN says ...

- **More than 5,400 people** were killed last year alone.
- **Tens of thousands,** including children, have been arrested, more than 18,000 are arbitrarily detained and thousands are missing.
- **25,000 people are** estimated to have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, and more than 70,000 are internally displaced.
- **Widespread destruction** of homes, hospitals and schools indicates approval of, or complicity with, the highest authorities.

Bailout still faces obstacles

Any hitch in getting Greek proposal through parliaments in eurozone could push Greece perilously close to missing major bond redemption on March 20

Greece faces further hurdles and delays before it can receive a second $171-billion US bailout in spite of parliamentarians voting through more austerity measures in the face of violent protests.

Olli Rehn, economic affairs minister of the European Union, called the Greek parliament's approval of a further round of budget cuts a "crucial step forward," but Germany insisted it would still take some time before the second bailout is delivered.

Germany, which pays the largest part in bailout deals, said it wouldn't give final approval for the new aid payments until early March — after it becomes clear how many banks and investment funds are willing to take losses on their Greek bonds and the parliament in Berlin votes on the new measures.

Pushing the new bailout back for several weeks underlines the amount of distrust that has built up against Greece over the past two years, when many promised cuts and reforms were passed in its parliament but never implemented.

"Germany is trying to get the best deal it can by putting pressure on Greece now," said Ben May, European economist at Capital Economics in London. The idea is to "give Greece a bit more of an incentive over the next few weeks to speed things up and get things moving."

Uncertainty over the new rescue money could dissuade some of Greece's private investors from participating in a separate bond-swap deal, May warned. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THANASSIS STAVRAKIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ An employee of the Greek Stock Exchange passes charts displaying stock prices in Athens on Monday.

DIMITRI MESSINIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ An Athens storeowner surveys damage to her shop.

GREECE CLEANS UP AFTER RIOTS ROIL ATHENS

Firefighters doused smouldering buildings and cleanup crews swept rubble from the streets of central Athens on Monday following a night of rioting during which lawmakers approved harsh new austerity measures demanded by bailout creditors to save the nation from bankruptcy.

Police said rioters destroyed or damaged more than 110 buildings, of which 50 were burned. They included nine listed as national heritage buildings, mostly in the neoclassical style. Thirty stores were also looted.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Market moment

PRICES AS OF 5 P.M. MONDAY

TSX	Dollar	Oil	Natural gas	Gold
+ 9.27 (12,398.69)	+ 0.35¢ (100.07¢ US)	+ $2.24 US ($100.91 US)	$2.43 US (-5¢ US)	$1,724.90 US (- 40¢ US)

Ottawa decries new U.S. banking reforms

Canada has stepped up its fight against new bank restrictions proposed by the United States that Ottawa says would adversely affect saving and borrowing costs north of the border.

In separate letters to Washington policy-makers, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty and Bank of Canada Governor Mark Carney complain that sweeping reforms under the so-called "Volcker rule" would reach well beyond their intended scope.

The impact of the new rules could be greater in Canada, making savings through mutual funds and borrowing more expensive.

"The rule, as currently drafted, would have an unprecedented extraterritorial reach and significant cross-border effects ... given the close inter-linkages between the Canadian and U.S. financial systems," Flaherty wrote Monday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Apple stock rises above $500

Apple's stock broke above $500 for the first time Monday. It was the latest step in a rally that began more than two weeks ago, when the company reported staggering sales and profits for the holiday quarter.

On Jan. 24, Apple posted net income of $13.06 billion, more than doubling its profits from the year before.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Housing market due for stability: Report

Canada's hot housing market is due for a soft landing that stabilizes prices, sales and new construction over the next two years, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. said Monday.

"With the Canadian economy set to expand at a moderate pace and mortgage rates expected to remain low, activity levels in 2012 in both new home construction and sales of existing homes will stay close to levels seen in 2011," CMHC deputy economist Mathieu Laberge said in a statement.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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BRINGING SEXY BACK FOR VALENTINE'S DAY

SHE SAYS ...

JESSICA NAPIER
METRO

Valentine's Day, in all its saccharin-sweet glory, is the perfect litmus test for determining the current status of your relationship.

Couples embarking on their first Valentine's night together will pull out all the stops. There will be candle-lit dinners, elaborate gifts and racy lingerie with more tassels and wiring than a Cirque du soleil costume.

For long-term partners, this candy-heart holiday might as well just be any other Tuesday. If things get super-romantic, you'll share an extra-large pizza and peel off your flannel PJs at the end of the night for some obligatory Valentine's Day sex.

As much as we might hate to admit it, somewhere along the way the honeymoon phase ends and the comfortable stage begins. So how does a passionate duo turn into Team Sweatpants, and what can stuck-in-a-rut couples do to put the spark back in the relationship?

"Suddenly that sexy stranger from across the room is the guy who doesn't cut his toenails and leaves his wet towels on the floor."

I posed the question to relationship expert and registered sex therapist Dr. Teesha Morgan because, frankly, we could all benefit from some sexpert advice at this time of year.

"In the beginning, relationships are often ignited and kept alive by lust," says Morgan.

When we start dating someone new, we have a tendency to project onto our partners all the good qualities that we want him or her to have, rather than what exists in actuality. Once the novelty wears off, we come to realize that our perfect partner is actually human. Suddenly that sexy stranger from across the room is the guy who doesn't cut his toenails and leaves his wet towels on the floor. Attraction turns to frustration and the fire begins to burn out.

As Hallmark-y as it might be, Valentine's Day is a good opportunity to look at your own relationship and evaluate whether or not you could use a little more excitement.

If you want to reignite that initial spark, you've got to make your significant other a priority. Ensure your partner feels desired by showing an interest in trying new things together on the intimacy front. "Variety truly is the spice of life," says Morgan. "Willingness to step outside the box and become a little more adventurous is an important factor to the longevity of a satisfying sex life."

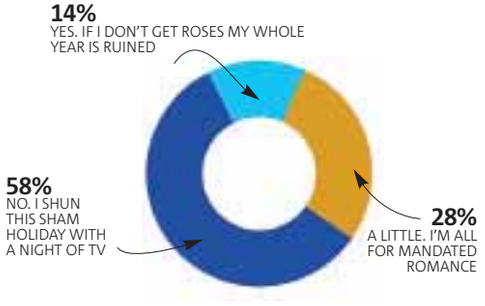
So instead of reaching for the remote tonight, try reaching for, well, something else.

There are plenty of options out there, but it's up to you to make an effort to bring sexy back this Valentine's Day, whether it's your first, fifth or 50th year together between the sheets.

Read more of Jessica Napier's columns at metronews.ca/shesays

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll

Do you stress over getting a Valentine's Day date?


14%
YES. IF I DON'T GET ROSES MY WHOLE YEAR IS RUINED
58%
NO. I SHUN THIS SHAM HOLIDAY WITH A NIGHT OF TV
28%
A LITTLE. I'M ALL FOR MANDATED ROMANCE

Local tweets

- **@james shelley:** I believe in 0% -- like how about bringing #ldnont's waiting list for affordable housing down to zero?
- **@TwoRealtors:** 10,000 Smart meters activated around the City of London! How is this affecting you and your consumption habits? #ldnont
- **@VortexVisual:** I can't help but wonder how well some #ldnont councillors slept last night. This is going to be an interesting week.
- **@ldnlksmth:** Banning outdoor smoking In #ldnont: how on earth will they enforce that? What a ridiculous idea! I don't smoke, but this offends me!
- **@pilarsantiago:** Cannot wait for this week to be over, I need a breakkk #readingweek #uwo
- **@joeshowpuritt:** London for the day. Haven't been back since grad #uwo #jacksmonday
- **@lindseywho:** You know your day is gunna be good when you snag a purple beanbag chair in the UCC lounge. #naptime #uwo
- **@LondonOntario1:** #Valentinesday tomorrow give the gift of love to your friends family pets and of course yourself. #ldnont

Daily Zoom

TONY'S GALLERY

Artist covers her room with yarn

LONDON. This woolly room will have you bouncing off the walls! At Tony's Gallery off Brick Lane, London, an artist has crocheted a life-sized replica of her bedroom, complete with explicit messages from her personal life. Polish-born artist Agata Oleksiak, a.k.a. Olek, found fame after veiling New York monuments in yarn. MWN

60 seconds

KNITTING & VODKA

How long did this take you?
Seven months in total. I don't know the amount of wool I used. The floor cover and walls were reused from past exhibits.

Why do you crochet?
It's not some ol' granny pastime but a method to show the connections between art and my life.

You must have a lot of patience to knit all that.
I spent two months living in this room knitting. I watched Jim Jarmusch and Wim Wenders movies and drank nut-flavoured vodka to pass the time!

And your dream artwork?
To crochet the entire White House. That would be amazing. Obviously I would need the entire nation to help me crochet.

ANTHONY JOHNSTON

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2 scene

Scene in brief

Adele's songs about breakups and heartache have made her a multi-Grammy award winner, but she insists she's done with all that. In an interview featured in the March issue of Vogue magazine, the 23-year-old says people think she's "miserable" because of her songs. In fact, the singer vows to "never" write a breakup record again and adds she's "done being a bitter witch." Adele has a lot to be happy about. She won six Grammy awards Sunday night, including record and album of the year. 21 was 2011's bestselling album. The March issue of Vogue goes on sale Feb. 21.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Angelina Jolie says she hopes directorial debut on Bosnian war will provoke discussion on rape

Interview with the writer

Anne Rice built a career writing about vampires way before Edward and Bella ever set eyes on each other In her latest work, she moves into werewolf territory

MEREDITH ENGEL
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA
METRO WORLD NEWS IN NEW YORK

The Wolf Gift, the newest novel from Anne Rice, the queen of supernatural stories (remember Interview with a Vampire?), hits shelves today. We spoke with the author about her influences, characters and her thoughts on the future of book publishing.

You were raised in a very strict Catholic upbringing. What influence did that have on you and your writing?

I think it influenced everything. I grew up in the '40s and '50s in New Orleans, which is a Catholic city. I was in a Catholic parish, going to a Catholic school, in a world where everybody went to a Catholic school, and we had beautiful churches all over New Orleans, and all of that ended up influencing my work tremendously. I had lots of church, of course, before I wrote Interview with the Vampire, but Interview with the Vampire was a lot of that, grieving for that, grieving for that lost sense of being involved in a meaningful community. It's kind of natural, I think, for someone who grew up like that to write about European-American characters, like Louis was a French plantation owner living in Louisiana.

Did your background influence The Wolf Gift?

I think it's a synthesis of where I've just been and what I've gone back to. For 12 years, I attempted to be a Christian again — I went back to the church and for 12 years I really lived it, breathed it, wrote two books about Jesus that provided me with one of the greatest experiences in my career. And I've left that, I've publicly left religion, and I'm back again with the classic monsters of horror, but I think the work is really synthesizing. It's really pulling together a lot of what I've learned during those Christian years and it feels to me different from the older vampire novels. First of all, it's very contemporary: Reuben is young and living in San Francisco right now and I had confidence to present him in this contemporary world that I kind of lacked years ago.

GETTY IMAGES

Anne Rice

I heard you got the idea for this book from the producer of the TV show White Collar.

That is true. I emailed Jeff Eastin because I'm a big fan of the show. I just think it's one of the most fresh and clever shows on TV. We have an email friendship going and he said something about it in an email. He said that he'd watched a documentary on werewolves and something about if I ever wanted to do a werewolf novel, he would buy buckets of it, and it was just a casual thing and I got to thinking, Wow. Most of the time when people mention werewolves, I would always say: "No, I'm not going to do that. My sister's done that and I don't want to crowd her." Then I got to thinking, "Well, Alice has been gone since 2007, I miss her terribly, but maybe it's OK now, five years later, to write about werewolves. Maybe it's alright; I wouldn't encroach on anything she's done."

And I read that you based the main character of this book on the star of White Collar, Matt Bomer. Have you ever met him?

Nope.

Does he know he's inspired a character in your book?

I don't know. I should send him a copy! Jeff knows; he's read The Wolf Gift. I just acknowledge Matt as the physical model. You know, Matt's voice, Matt's eyes.

He is a beautiful man.

Well, yeah, he is. You know, I didn't even plan it. I just kept seeing and hearing Reuben as Matt Bomer. If they were to make a movie and Matt Bomer were to step into that role, I would be absolutely thrilled.

Matt Bomer

DVD reviews — Buy it ●●●●● | Rent it ●●●● | Borrow it ●●● | Yawn ●● | Don't bother ●

The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn — Part 1
Genre: Drama
Director: Bill Condon
Stars: Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson, Taylor Lautner
●●

There are more bubbles than blood as Bella Swan finally gets her (dead) man in part one of Breaking Dawn, the conclusion of the Twilight teen vampire franchise.

Melodrama reigns in this supernatural soap opera, even though Stephanie Meyer's tale takes a sharp turn toward the violently weird.

After three films in which Bella Swan (Kristen Stewart) and her vampire beau Edward Cullen (Robert Pattinson) exchanged smouldering looks, they finally get on the good foot to do the bad thing, which not only literally wrecks the marital bed, but results in a monstrous pregnancy that could kill the human (for now) Bella.

Director Bill Condon (a Twilight newbie) and returning screenwriter Melissa Rosenberg don't stray much from Meyer's source text or tamper with a profitable romance that is now more cash cow than Cupid. There's not much they can do about a story that has grown steadily more risible.

With talk of unplanned pregnancy, abortion and marital discord entering the picture, Twilight is now really an "R" picture under a "PG" label, and it's an uncomfortable fit.

I have just one question for Twihards before next year's Part 2: Does Dracula offer daycare services?

Extras include a director's commentary and making-of featurettes.

PETER HOWELL

More on Whitney Houston's death

New info continues to be revealed about what caused the singer's untimely death at the age of 48

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

▶ Whitney Houston (1963–2012)

THE WORD

DOROTHY ROBINSON
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

Though authorities are not confirming anything other than she was found in the bathtub, some websites are reporting that Whitney Houston died from an overdose of Xanax and liquor. And according to TMZ.com, coroner's officials informed the family that there was not enough water in Whitney's lungs for a drowning, as was initially assumed. Officials believe she passed away before her head became submerged in water, though the official toxicology report won't be complete for four to six weeks.

Although earlier reports say that her stylist, hairdresser and two bodyguards were among the ones who found Houston underwater, reports now say it was her aunt Mary Jones who discovered Houston's body.

TMZ.com says Houston had apparently been in the bathroom for more than an hour when Jones went in to check on her. Upon seeing Houston, Jones pulled the singer out of the tub and started CPR. RadarOnline.com reports that her body was probably under water for 30 minutes and the autopsy shows that her body had no "obvious signs of trauma, but her throat appeared to be inflamed upon examination."

NBC New York reports that once Houston's body is released to her family by the L.A. Coroner, she will be eulogized in her birthplace of Newark, N.J. Whigham Funeral Home — who handled the funeral for Houston's father, as well as the memorial for Arthur Lee Warrick, the mother of Dionne Warwick (Houston's cousin), and for Ann Drinkard Moss, the sister of Houston's mother, Cissy — will reportedly be handling the arrangements.

▶ Jennifer Hudson sang I Will Always Love You at the Grammy Awards on Sunday.

Celebrity tweets

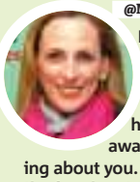
@kanyewest

Pardon me... do you have any crepe chiffon?

@rustyrockets

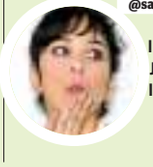
The intuitive mind is a gift and the rational mind a servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.

@MarleeMatlin



Before I forget, Happy Valentine's Day. I'll be half a world away but thinking about you. Support the freedom to love and live peacefully.

@sarahksilverman



I just read John: 3:16. It's dumb!

Adele has a new man

Not only were the Grammy Awards a big night trophywise for Adele, but it was also a chance for the British singer to make her first official appearance with boyfriend Simon Konecki, according to Us Weekly.

Konecki was by Adele's side in the front row of the Staples Center as she won in all six categories in which she was nominated. The pair had previously been spotted last month on a romantic trip to the Florida Everglades. METRO

Have you
JODI PICOULT
read them all?
HANDLE WITH CARE
HOUSE RULES
"Picoult is a rare writer who delivers book after book...." —ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY
JODI PICOULT
#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR
LONE WOLF
COMING FEBRUARY 28TH
A life hanging in the balance . . .
a family torn apart—
LONE WOLF
—an unforgettable NEW novel from
JODI PICOULT.
Simon & Schuster Canada • simonandschuster.ca • jodipicoult.com

EASY WAYS TO KEEP THE ROMANCE BURNING

WAVEBREAK MEDIA/THINKSTOCK

SURE, WE START WITH SEXUAL SIZZLE, BUT SOMETIMES IT JUST FIZZLES

Indeed, few couples can maintain the heightened rabbit-paced sex habits so rampant early on in a relationship, but some do manage to keep the romance burning.

What's the secret?

A combination of effort, awareness and novelty does the trick.

While a study published this month online in the Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy found that women ages 18 to 25 in monogamous relationships gradually lose sexual interest, don't fret — you don't have to let your below-the-belt desires shrivel.

The University of Guelph researchers behind the study, Sarah Murray and Robin Milhausen, suggest the end of the "honeymoon phase" could tie into waning female desire.

Thankfully, past studies have found that sex actually improves in committed relationships, compared to one-night stands.

"Long-term, people find sex with someone they love more satisfying," says Dr. Oren Amitay, registered psychologist and instructor at Ryerson University.

There is, however, a natural drop in sexual appetite as time passes.

"Very rarely are you going to have the same passion you had when you started," says Amitay.

"The reason it goes is familiarity. That's why novelty is so important. Basically, we become used to something, and naturally our physiological response decreases."

Other explanations may include built-up resentments and increased responsibilities.

For couples looking to restore bedroom bliss, small steps are advisable.

"Very few people will turn down a massage," offers Amitay.

"Then move onto a full-body massage. You can slowly introduce more and more."

Meanwhile, a visit to a reputable sex shop (most are housed with educated and approachable staffers) is a fun way to inspire discussion and keep things fresh. Consider buying an erotic video, book or new adult toy.

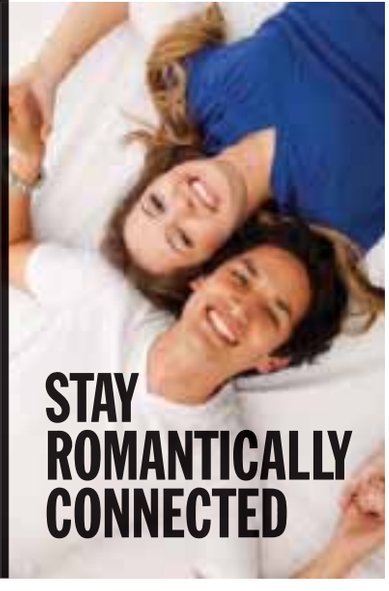
"A lot of people don't realize you have to work at it," says Amitay.

"Almost every couple has a decrease. You can't expect partners to be as passionate 20 years later, but you can re-ignite the passion."

– Tanya Enberg

SIZZLE STARTERS

- Waiting for the sexual magic to happen spontaneously can prove unsuccessful. Jot lovemaking down on the calendar if you need to, but be proactive
- Book a sitter and plan regular date nights
- A stress-free reprieve is the perfect way to reconnect emotionally and physically



HEMERA/THINKSTOCK

STAY ROMANTICALLY CONNECTED

Having it all and getting it all are vastly different things.

Unfortunately success doesn't just boil down to the snappy — yet highly simplified — work-life balance ideal.

While this is the message of our overloaded, Type A world (which calls for maintaining a fabulous career, time with friends, a regular work-out routine, clean home, stocked refrigerator, fresh laundry, happy kids, and a relationship teeming with hot sex), it isn't always so easy to achieve.

Surely, something's gotta give.

When that something is your sex life, well, you're not going to take that lying down, right?

For some, especially working parents, juggling too many demands is bad news for romance.

"Realize where you need to delegate," advises Toronto-based life coach Krista Roesler.

"Maybe the kids need to step it up and help with the chores, (or you can) find support in the community, but don't be afraid to ask for help."

Roesler suggests creating a list of daily demands to help identify areas where energy is wasted, and highlight key spots where more focus is required. This is helpful for determining what holds the most importance and editing out the rest. Sometimes this will mean turning down an offer to volunteer opportunity, cutting back on night classes or, simply, learning the art of slowing down.

For over-stressed partners, finding an outlet is essential.

"Parents need to take time off," insists Roesler.

"Have the grandparents look after the kids and take a weekend away," she says. Roesler adds that it's vital for couples to share space together beyond their parental roles, and equally important for children for developing independence and confidence.

"Teaching kids that you need to have a balanced life, that's important. It's really easy to lose yourself when you have kids."

Whether you pencil in date nights or prefer sexual spontaneity, staying romantically connected is a natural health booster that also happens to work wonders for your relationship.

"It's so important," stresses Roesler.

"Some people are planners, others are not, just make sure it (sex) doesn't become an obligation, another thing you have to do."

– Tanya Enberg

Speedflirt

He winks, *she winks back*
She flirts, *He flirts back*

Introducing Speedflirt, a flirty new app for meeting singles in your city looking for love or friendship.

Create a profile, browse profiles and find your match!

Download and install the free app for your mobile device - available on the App Store or also available in Android Market.

Available in Android Market

Available on the App Store

We wanted to know a little about *flirting* and *love* from our Metropolitans, this is what they had to say:

How important is it to find and/or keep love in 2012?

Important 28%
Neither important or unimportant 17%
Unimportant 5%
Very Unimportant 4%

ONLINE DATING

34% have tried it
29% have never tried online dating, but would give it a shot

38% of Metropolitans do all the flirting...

While 62% stand back and wait to be flirted with!

Where's the best place to flirt?

At a Party 25%
• Pub 13% • Work 11%
• Online 7% • Grocery Store 6%
• Nightclub 6% • School 5%
• Mall 3% • Gym 2%

When flirting, how forward are you?

19% Subtle like a ninja!
4% Forward. Bull in a china shop.
35% A little bit of both

Metropolitan Panel is an online research panel dedicated to dialogue with you! When you participate, your voice joins thousands of others in 14 countries. Sign up for the panel at metropolitanpanel.ca, choose your country and joint he global conversation!

Source: Metropolitan Panel Survey; 352 Respondents; January 2012

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Metropolitan Panel

3 life

Truly, madly, deeply: Why do we get jealous?

Valentine's Day isn't all about being madly in love Dr. David Buss, relationship expert and author of The Dangerous Passion: Why Jealousy is as Necessary as Love and Sex, explains the science behind the 'j' word

ROMINA McGUINNESS
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METRO WORLD NEWS IN LONDON

ISTOCK PHOTO

▶ This won't end well.

Do you ever feel protective of your relationship — as if someone else is out to get your man (or woman)?

You may be overly cautious. Or you may just be reacting normally. Mate poachers exist. And Dr. David Buss, author of The Dangerous Passion, says we've psychological adapted to defend ourselves against such threats.

First, is your partner your equal?

Determine their mate value: how desirable is this person on the mating market? Think about anything from looks to social status.

When a couple pairs up they tend to have approximately similar mating values but discrepancies do develop over time.

"If one gets a big promotion at work, they could increase their mate value by virtue of the position. The lower mate value person tends to be most jealous as statistically, it's more likely for the higher mate value person either having an affair or terminating the relationship," says Buss.

Then, identify the nature of the threat

According to Buss, men and women are equally jealous but differ in the nature of their emotion.

"For a man the sexual aspect of an infidelity poses a threat as it casts a doubt over their paternity certainty," he said. "Men place a greater premium on physical attractiveness in potential mates so when women see their man in a sexually charged interaction with a physically more attractive woman, that can drive a women crazy."

Take action

"Women enhance their physical appearance as a mate protection tactic whereas men redouble their efforts to fulfill their partners' desires," he said. "Men are more physically reactive and more likely to get drunk or commit crimes of passion."

Jealousy as a symbol of love and commitment

No one wants to be with someone no one else wants. Stick to your mate value equal and hopefully you can avoid a Basic Instinct 3.

THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS JEALOUSY CASES

AMERICAN FOOTBALL STAR OJ SIMPSON

▶ Although found 'not guilty,' Simpson was suspected of murdering his ex-wife Nicole Brown.

NASA ASTRONAUT LISA MARIE NOWAK

▶ After a 950-mile, 12 hour journey (wearing an adult nappy to avoid bathroom breaks), Nowak confronted love rival Colleen Shipman armed with a BB gun and pepper spray.

A new study shows

30

...minutes of sex can burn off more than 80 calories. Surely it's the best consequence of fighting with your lover. Say yes to make-up sex. AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SEXUALITY EDUCATORS

V-day tips

- Buy her a card, you don't have to be a poet to be a great lover
- Indulge in 20 minutes or more of foreplay instead of jumping straight to sex. Start with a foot massage and move up the body

JOHN GRAY, AUTHOR OF 'MEN ARE FROM MARS, WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS, MARSVENUS.COM

WHO says leprosy still around after being declared eliminated from the Western Pacific region

Best Health Minute

BONNIE MUNDAY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, BEST HEALTH MAGAZINE

Sleep remedies: What Works?

The experts interviewed for Michelle Villet's article on sleep remedies recommend seeing your doctor if sleep problems last two weeks. But for occasional sleeplessness, there are plenty of drugstore remedy options.

Always be sure to follow package directions carefully and heed any warnings.

Antihistamine-based remedies (Rexall Extra Strength Sleep Aid Liquid Fastgels, Advil Nighttime, Insomnal, Nytol, Sleepeze D Extra Strength, Tylenol Simply Sleep): The active ingredient in these is diphenhydramine hydrochloride, an antihistamine with sedative properties that directs receptors in the brain to relax.

Melatonin-based remedies (Jamieson Melatonin-3; Genuine Health Sleep+Time Release, Nature's Harmony Timed Release Melatonin, Webber Naturals Melatonin): Melatonin is a hormone secreted by the pineal gland. It helps regulate the body's sleep-wake cycle; normally, melatonin levels rise in the evening to help us fall asleep, and then they drop off in the morning.

Herbal and mineral remedies: Some use a form of magnesium (New Nordic Melissa and Can-Prev Magnesium Bis-Glycinate 200), a mineral involved in more than 2,000 chemical reactions in the body, many of them related to sleep and relaxation. Other remedies use 5-HTP (FemMed Sleep), an amino acid that helps restore serotonin, a neurotransmitter that regulates sleep. Then there is valerian (Swiss Natural Sources Valerian), which is a herbal extract that targets the same receptors in the brain as certain prescription meds but without the addictive properties or memory loss.

Again, always read labels carefully, and always talk to your doctor about any concerns you have.

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Romance of Paris in London

Auberge du Petit Prince is a charming bistro serving tasty French cuisine

LUNCH RUSH

PAUL MITCHELL
FOOD@METRONEWS.CA

Wrap yourself in the warm, romantic embrace of a trip to Paris without leaving the city. Auberge du Petit Prince seduces palates as London's favoured French restaurant.

Our table waits in a cosy room styled after a rural marketplace with soft earth-tones and painted murals. A front solarium café offers a casual alternative.

My date and I share Escargot ($9) and glasses of wine. Our taste buds are tantalized with morsels of succulent earthy richness nuanced by delicate garlic and butter flavours. Toasted baguettes add texture.

Perfectly grilled Giant Prawns ($16) are nestled atop al dente risotto accented with lemon and spinach, and basked in a creamy Pernod sauce. Licorice hints add depth to this rich, satisfying dish.

Meanwhile, rosemary scents the air above the classic Steak and Frites ($22).

Auberge du Petit Prince is a charming bistro that serves as an indulgent temptation for exploring the cuisine of romantic French culture.

Auberge du Petit Prince
458-460 King St. (at Maitland)
519-434-7124
aubergerestaurant.ca
Hours: Mon - Wed (5 - 9 p.m.), Thurs - Sat (11:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.), Sun (11 a.m. - 9 p.m.)
Social lunch: Yes
Co-worker lunch: Yes
Client negotiations: Yes
Licensed: Yes
Price range: $12 - $22
Rating: 4 out of 5

PAUL MITCHELL

Giant Prawns ($16)

MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

X-Rated Kiss Cocktail

This Valentine's Day, cocktail sports a risqué name, is easy on the eyes and drinks like candy.

X-Rated, for those unfamiliar with it, isn't just a movie classification. It also is the name of a hot pink liqueur made from vodka infused with passion fruit, blood orange and mango.

Preparation:

1. Divide the raspberry liqueur between 2 martini glasses.
2. In a cocktail shaker filled with ice, combine the lime juice, X-Rated, gin and pink peppercorns. Shake vigorously then strain and divide between the glasses, pouring it carefully down the sides of the glasses. Garnish with edible flower petals. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ ADAPTED BY EMILY RICHARDS (PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOKBOOK AUTHOR, TV CELEBRITY CHEF. FOR MORE, VISIT EMILYRICHARDSCOOK.CA.**

Ingredients:

- 60 ml (2 oz) raspberry liqueur
- Ice
- 90 ml (3 oz) X-Rated Fusion Liqueur
- 30 ml (1 oz) gin
- 30 ml (1 oz) lime juice
- Pinch of crushed pink peppercorns
- Edible flower petals, to garnish

Spread V-Day love with Red Velvet

Cupcakes are the perfect way to show your Valentine how much you care These ones are bite-size and topped with fluffy whipped cream

DINNER EXPRESS

EMILY RICHARDS
FOOD@METRONEWS.CA

These little bite-size treats are perfect to share with friends. To make them a bit different you can pour the batter into prebaked mini tartlet shells and bake for a cupcake tart.

They're actually not too sweet and a touch of whipped cream on top is the perfect finish!

Preparation:

1. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking powder and soda; set aside.
2. In another small bowl, whisk together buttermilk, butter, egg, food colouring and vanilla. Pour over flour mix and whisk until smooth and combined.
3. Divide batter among greased or paper-lined mini muffin tin and bake in 350 F (180 C) oven for about 15 minutes or until tester comes out clean. Remove from pan and let cool completely on rack. Top with whipped cream and serve.

EMILY RICHARDS IS A PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOKBOOK AUTHOR AND CELEBRITY TV CHEF. FOR MORE, VISIT EMILYRICHARDSCOOKS.CA.

Ingredients:

- 1 1/4 cups (300 mL) sifted cake and pastry flour
- 2/3 cup (150 mL) granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) each baking powder and baking soda
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) buttermilk
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) butter, melted
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) red food colouring
- 1 tsp (5 mL) pure vanilla extract
- Whipped cream

EMILY RICHARDS

This recipe makes 24 cupcakes.

CONTRIBUTED

▶ He looks happy, they look happy, everyone wins.

Happy to be single

CHIARA ATIK
LIFE@METRONEWS.CA

Of course, we all want to find that special someone someday ... but here are four reasons to be happy that someday is not today.

1 The opportunity to check out all those "what-ifs"
A random person you meet at a party, an acquaintance you've had a crush on forever, maybe even a co-worker: when you're single, you can pursue these "what-ifs" and see where they lead.

More often than not, these little sparks of romance turn out to be nothing, but at least when you're single, the not knowing won't drive you crazy.

2 Not shaving...
your legs, your beard or any other part of your body.

Not shaving, and sparing those extra 15 minutes in the morning just because you don't feel like it, is the luxury of being single.

3 Wild nights! Wild nights!
It's pretty nice to be able to go out, and stay out, as long as you want without having to worry about whether your significant other is tired, or their feet hurt, or you said you'd call, or they have an early start in the morning, or hearing "you're so old!" in a faux-complaining voice and regretful smiles as you head out the door.

And if, at midnight, a friend calls and invites you to come out, you can just go. And if, at 2 a.m., you meet someone you like, you can just kiss them, or go home with them, or just get their number.

And if, at 4 a.m., you feel like getting a slice of pizza, or a whole pizza, you can, no problem. Who's going to care?

4 Not having to hang out with anyone else's friends
You have your own friends, and it's hard enough to find time to hang out with them.

Sort of nice not to have to spend a Friday night hanging out with someone else's friends, no?

'Like a piece of meat'

Metro's Liz Brown recently dropped in on an anti-Valentine's Day singles party

LIZ BROWN
LIFE@METRONEWS.CA

Ever wonder what would happen if you gathered all the people on an online dating site into the same room?

I never pondered the possibilities of such a situation until last Saturday night, when I attended an anti-Valentine's Day singles party at C-Lounge in Toronto, hosted by a company called Meet Market Adventures.

Being of the adventurous sort, willing to try anything once — and single myself, I thought it might be a good place to expand my potential dating circle. And while I met several guys, the event shared many similarities with online dating — as in, if you're female and attractive enough to go out in public, you're getting plenty of attention. This isn't always a good thing.

When my friend and I arrived at the bar at about 10 p.m., it was already packed. Singles ranging from 25 to 45 mingled over hors d'oeuvres and packed the dance floor, bumping and grinding to Top 40 tunes. The pair of us, being more of the wallflower than life-of-the-party type, grabbed drinks and settled ourselves in a corner of the bar to take in the crowd. The male to female ratio seemed an ideal 50:50 split.

ISTOCK

▶ Going to a singles event is a great way to boost your self-esteem. But be prepared ladies ...

Memorable opening lines of the night

- "Check out my tan. I bet I'm more tanned than you. I just got back from Mexico."
- "Don't go to the bar, you can have my drink." (A half sipped warm rum and coke).
- "I have a girlfriend right now, but it's ending soon."
- "What's your sign?"

At the front of the room, the more social singles were jostling to enter a draw to win a trip to New York City and participate in a human scavenger hunt — a search for a member of the opposite sex who had come to the party with their ex.

Several women in the 30-to-40-year-old range wearing dresses joined us on the outer fringes, playing with their hair, and subtly swaying to the music, presumably hoping to be asked to dance. While some guys were bold and approached the women, others stood by in their dress pants and button shirts, surveying the room.

This surveying was a little more overt than typical of a regular bar.

Of course, the end game of such an event is to 'pick-up,' but it was slightly jarring to walk into a bar knowing that every man in the room knew with certainty your solo status — or perhaps not. One not-so-sharp fellow approached us and opened with "So, are you two ladies single?"

As we stood there, a bit too overwhelmed to mingle, a steady stream of potential suitors approached us with all manner of pick-up lines.

While we sipped our drinks and felt the burning stare of dozens of pairs of male eyes, my pal leaned over, "Do you feel like a piece of meat in this place?"

"Completely."

"Want to go somewhere else?"

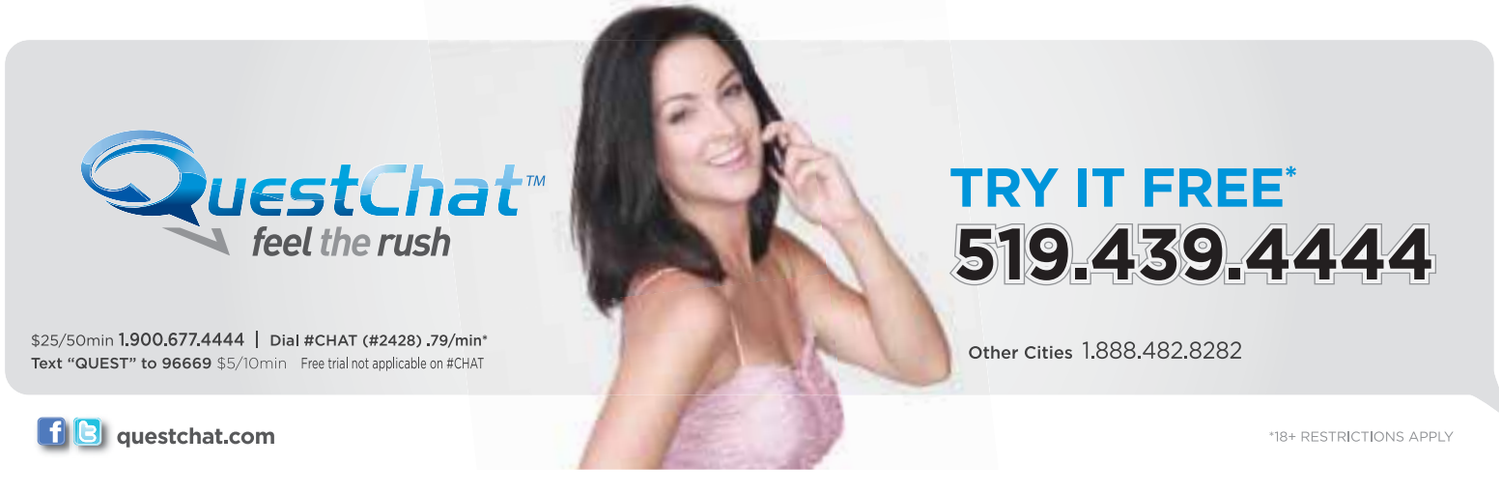
"Definitely."

After just an hour of our Meet (or was it meat?) Market Adventure, we packed it in and headed to our favourite dive bar where we did shots and hit the dance floor, happy that our single status remained personal information.

Although the event had uncomfortable overtones for me, if you're feeling lonely and need to be reassured there are plenty of single people out there, it's not a bad place to spend a Saturday night.

For more info

- Meet Market Adventures hosts singles events in most major cities in Canada. For a list of upcoming events, visit Meetmarketadventures.com.



Pros & Cons

Should you take out loan to invest in an RRSP There are advantages

JANE DOUCET
FOR METRO

GETTY IMAGES/JUPITERIMAGES/BRAND X PICTURES/THINKSTOCK

Borrowing money to invest in an RRSP has many advantages.

Besides the immediate tax savings, it allows you to increase the amount you have to invest, take advantage of tax-sheltered compounding, boost your investment returns, achieve your long-term financial goals faster and build a larger and more diversified retirement portfolio.

But how do you know if you should take out this type of loan? It's a good idea to borrow for an RRSP if you want to make a contribution now but don't have any money set aside, you want to take advantage of your unused contribution room, or you are in a higher marginal tax bracket than you were last year.

RRSP loans have low interest rates, flexible repayment options of up to 10 years, deferred payments of up to 90 days and no early repayment penalty. That's all good news. But what about the downsides?

"The biggest problem with RRSP loans is that people don't put the tax savings back onto the loan," says Stephen Cox, a certified financial planner professional with Desjardins Financial Security Independent Network in Halifax.

"Instead, they'll use it to take a vacation or buy an expensive item they've been eyeing."

Another pitfall is that those who take out a long-term RRSP loan — say, over five to 10 years — get sick of making the payments.

"Most people take the longer-term loan intending to pay it back sooner, but few do," says Cox.

"It's a better idea to take out a loan for a smaller amount over a shorter period of time, such as one or two years."

If you borrow for an RRSP and the market does well, then you are ahead of the game. But if it doesn't do well?

"You could possibly pay more in interest on the loan over time than what you saved in tax," says Cox. "It's unlikely, but possible."

Saving for the future is a balancing act

It's hard to find a balance between keeping money in your wallet now, leading the lifestyle you enjoy, and also saving for the future.

There are many considerations when determining the savings plan that's right for you: One option is a retirement savings plan (RSP). The deadline for making RSP contributions for the 2011 tax year is Feb. 29.

Other options for working towards a financially-secure future include: Paying down your debt or mortgage, contributing to a tax-free savings account (TFSA), a registered education savings plan (RESP) for your children's education, or other investments.

"RSPs are a great way to start saving for your retirement," says Kathryn Del Greco, vice-president, investment adviser, TD Waterhouse Private Investment Advice.

"However, ensure that you carefully weigh all the alternatives and find the right mix of investments tools that will help you achieve your short-, medium- and long-term goals."

Here are some tips to help you get started — or help with your current investments:

- Evaluate your investment portfolio regularly.
- Make sure you have a plan. Know what your goals are and determine what financial steps are needed to get there.
- If short of funds, consider a loan for your RSP contributions. The tax-deferred compound growth on your investments could potentially outweigh the interest costs.
- Contribute regularly.
- Be mindful of the limits. Review your notice of assessment statement provided by the Canada Revenue Agency to check the maximum you can contribute to your RSP.

NEWS CANADA

Reaching your goals

The Feb. 29 RRSP deadline is fast approaching. Some tips to help you reach your retirement goals:

Start early. The longer you are invested, the more your money will grow over time through contributions and investment earnings.

Diversify. "A balanced mutual fund is ideal for an RRSP," said Don Reed, president and CEO of Franklin Templeton Investments Corp. "Investors capture the upside of stocks with the security of bonds."

Tax efficiency. RRSP contributions are deducted from your income, resulting in a potentially significant tax deferral.

Small is beautiful. For as little as $50 per month, you can build a significant nest egg over many years.

NEWS CANADA

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BREAK TIME

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR READING WEEK

GETTY IMAGES/IUPITERIMAGES/COMSTOCK/THINKSTOCK

While American spring break conjures images of booze-filled partying, Canadian reading week summons scenes of caffeine-filled studying. Experts say the way to make the most of your February break is to combine academic catch-up with personal downtime.

Kristi Kerford, acting associate vice-president of student services at Ontario's Trent University, polled staff and students for their best approaches to the break.

"One of the key things that came up was thinking of it as being a balance of a reading and academic time, and also being time for yourself," she said.

On the personal side, you should recharge yourself. Sleep in, visit friends and family, and get to all those personal issues you have been putting off. She suggests setting a schedule for the week. If you are sharpest in the morning, do your academic work then and save afternoons and evenings for personal time.

"On the academic side, you want to be thinking about either catching up or getting ahead of your reading and course work," she adds.

If you are heading away for the break, pack thoughtfully. Some course materials are online, while others will require you to bring books.

Kerford says students should start thinking about summer job opportunities.

"If I'm going to my parents' home and I want to work there in the summer, that's a great opportunity to do some informational interviewing," she says. "You may not be back there again until the summer."

Erin Kaipainen, director of the Centre for Community-Engaged Learning at the University of Calgary, says some students use the week to learn about the real world and make an impact.

"We find students really want to be involved in their community, they want to be learning about issues affecting Calgary and other places, but sometimes it's challenging to fit that into their (academic) calendar," she says.

Hence the Alberta university's reading week programs. This year, one is a digital storytelling project with vulnerable youth in Calgary while another sends students to New Orleans to learn from and help with that community's post-Katrina recovery.

They are not for credits, but do give students in a range of programs an opportunity to try out classroom ideas. Others are overworked in their programs and just want a chance to do something unrelated to their studies.

"Instead of going somewhere hot and sitting on a beach, you're doing something else, something for your own personal development and learning about communities in Calgary or around the world," Kaipainen says.

— Jon Tattrie

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February 24

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To learn more, call 519-659-4822 and ask for Rob Tranter, Fitness Director.

FRANK FRANKLIN II/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

▶ Jeremy Lin

Raptors will try to stop 'Lin-sanity'

Dwane Casey is a huge Jeremy Lin fan, but the Raptors coach isn't being swept up in the "Lin-sanity."

The NBA's biggest story is in Toronto on Tuesday as the New York Knicks visit, but the coach who worked with Lin back when he was a non-descript point guard cautions against letting the game become a "sideshow."

"We're here for business," Casey said."He's a wonderful young man, I'm happy for him, but I'm not going to be happy for him (Tuesday) night. I want to kick his butt."

Lin is the first American-born NBA player of Asian heritage and a Harvard graduate who went undrafted. He was trying to land a job with the Mavericks in the summer of 2010 when Casey was a coach with Dallas.

The 23-year-old was named Eastern Conference player of the week Monday after his first week as a starter. Lin averaged 27.3 points and 8.3 assists while leading New York to a 4-0 record. His 109 points are the most by an NBA player in his first four starts since the 1976-77 season.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Loss to Habs still lingering with Leafs

Alternate captains to start season, Armstrong and Komisarek healthy scratches on Saturday 'I'll be ready when they need me,' says Armstrong

CLAUS ANDERSEN/GETTY IMAGES FILE

▶ Montreal's Lars Eller skates past Leafs captain Dion Phaneuf before scoring on James Reimer on Saturday night in Toronto.

Colby Armstrong kept his head down and tried to bite his lip. But there was little the Toronto Maple Leafs forward could do to conceal the fact he was still smarting two days after being made a healthy scratch.

"Obviously, I was upset about it," Armstrong said Monday.

The mood wasn't much better for those who suited up for Saturday's game — a 5-0 loss to Montreal on the night former captain Mats Sundin was honoured — which put an exclamation point on a week that raised a number of questions.

Arguably the most important of those surrounds the leadership group. Armstrong was joined in the press box by defenceman Mike Komisarek. Those two started the season as Dion Phaneuf's alternate captains, making it even more unusual that they would find themselves scratched on the same night.

While acknowledging it wasn't an easy decision, Ron Wilson said that no player can count on a guaranteed spot.

"Our guys understand it's a meritocracy," said the Leafs coach. "Whoever's playing best is going to be in the lineup."

Phil Kessel and Mikhail Grabovski each wore an "A" in the absence of Armstrong and Komisarek. It's likely to be a one-off occurrence, especially since defenceman Carl Gunnarsson left Monday's practice after crashing into the boards.

If Gunnarsson is unavailable for Tuesday's game in Calgary, Komisarek will be his replacement.

"Hopefully, it's not too serious," said Wilson.

The Leafs are among the youngest teams in the NHL, which appeared to play a role in Saturday's loss, where the Leafs came unglued during the second period after James Reimer let in a shaky goal that put the Habs up 1-0.

Despite a recent skid, Toronto remained eighth in the Eastern Conference as it boarded a plane Monday afternoon to set off for three games in Western Canada.

"Nothing's going to be easy, we know that," said forward Joffrey Lupul. "For the most part we've found a way to get the job done this year and we're going to have to continue to."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jays, Janssen avoid arbitration

CHARLES SONNENBLICK/GETTY IMAGES FILE

▶ Casey Janssen

The Toronto Blue Jays avoided arbitration with reliever Casey Janssen on Monday by signing the veteran right-hander to a $5.9-million US, two-year contract.

The deal includes a $4-million club option for the 2014 season.

Janssen was 6-0 with two saves last season and posted a 2.26 earned-run average over 55 appearances.

The Orange, Calif., native earned $1.095 million in 2011. Janssen was seeking $2.2 million in arbitration while Toronto had offered $1.8 million.

Janssen has spent all five of his MLB seasons with the Jays. He has a 21-19 career record with nine saves and a 3.81 ERA in 221 appearances. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sports in brief

Ortiz strikes deal with Sox

MLB. David Ortiz and the Boston Red Sox avoided salary arbitration by agreeing Monday to a one-year contract worth $14,575,000 US.

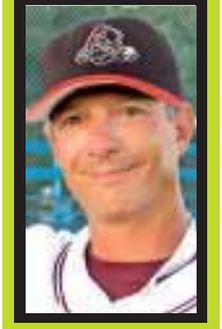
The deal was midway between the $16.5 million he asked for last month and the $12.65 million submitted by Boston, which matched his 2011 salary. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Flyers' Rinaldo gets 2-game ban

NHL. Philadelphia forward Zac Rinaldo was suspended by the NHL for two games on Monday for charging Detroit Red Wings defenceman Jonathan Ericsson. Rinaldo jumped into a body check that sent Ericsson to the ice in Detroit's 4-3 win over the Flyers on Sunday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

4 sports

Sports in brief



The London Rippers announced the hiring of London native Mike Lumley as assistant general manager of baseball operations on Monday.

Lumley will oversee daily baseball operations of the team while serving as a member of the coaching staff. The former Detroit Tiger brings a wealth of baseball experience both in the professional and amateur ranks.

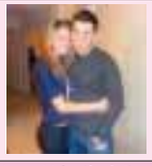
An accomplished coach with years of service with provincial and national team programs, Lumley was the head coach of the Western Mustangs men's baseball program and the Ontario minor baseball London Badgers. He has also served as the pitching coach for the Canadian junior national team.

SEND SOME LOVE

Valentine's Greetings

Forever and Always Babe!
Happy Valentines Day!
Love Shawn

Happy Valentine's Day Ginger,
You had me at Scary-Go-Round
Love your Turkish



Happy Valentine's Day
Mi Amor!
Can't wait to spend my
2nd
Valentine's Day with you!
Love,
Tracy

Happy Vanentine's Day Pumpkin Pants!
You make me laugh and my heart flow with love. You are my present and my futurre
Life is good baby! love, Parsnip Pants & Wes

Valentine's Greetings

**Kierra,
Happy Love Day, Love.
Love David**

To my Flipper,
Thank you for all your hard work looking after our kids and me. Happy Valents Day
I LOVE YOU !!!!!

Kim,
Wish I was there but i'll see you soon.
Wishing you a Happy St Valentine's Day.
Love Big B

NADA, You've made me a better man in the mind, heart and soul!
Love John,
Beautiful HoneyDew.

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Though admired by girls
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His only love, is Reagan, they fear!

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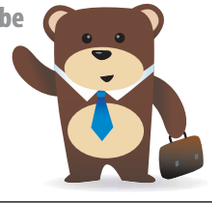

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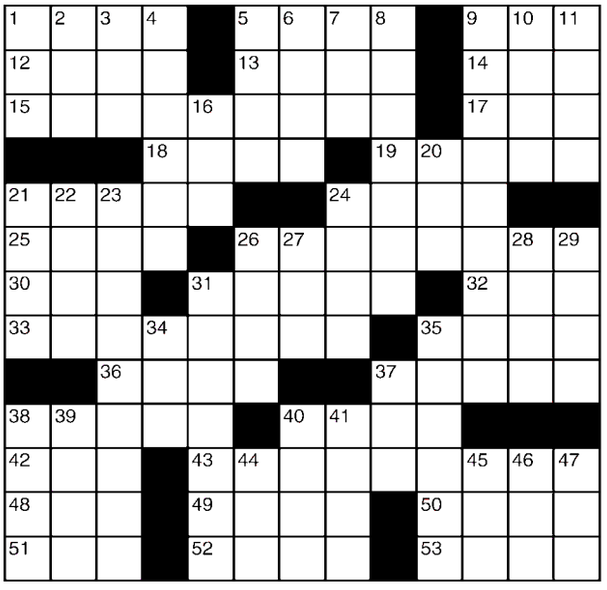
Crossword



Across

1 Mexican peninsula
5 Mussolini's title
9 Scoundrel
12 Culture medium
13 Composer Khachaturian
14 Past
15 Tea party guest
17 Regret
18 Corridor
19 Indy 500 entrant
21 Sorts
24 Conk on the noggin
25 Frost
26 Guaranteed to work
30 Bobby of hockey fame
31 Technophiles' magazine
32 Blue
33 Comfy chair
35 Existed
36 Female red deer
37 Pyromaniac's crime
38 Packing heat
40 Sagacious
42 Spelling contest
43 Some "USA Today" illustrations
48 Crib
49 Sheltered
50 Grand
51 Pismire
52 Pentagon VIPs
53 Barrel part

Down

1 Emeril's interjection
2 — Khan
3 It holds the mayo
4 William Tell, notably
5 Willy Wonka's creator
6 Caspian feeder
7 Automobile
8 May birthstone
9 Movie action scenes, often
10 Chills and fever
11 Active one
16 Owns
20 Donkey
21 Explorer Heyerdahl
22 Bygone times
23 Old paper
24 Coffin stand
26 Locate
27 100 square meters
28 Gambling game
29 Paradise
31 Talkative one
34 Falsehood
35 Christmas door decoration
37 Blond shade
38 "Waterloo" quartet
39 Check
40 Small songbird
41 Chills
44 Hearty quaff
45 Pi follower
46 Overly
47 Dine

▶ Monday's answer

S	E	W	S	■	E	A	R	■	G	A	S	P		
O	R	A	T	O	R	I	O	■	O	N	T	O		
S	A	G	A	M	O	R	E	■	O	N	E	S		
■	■	■	Y	E	S	■	N	E	G	A	T	E		
R	A	V	E	N	■	O	T	T	O	■	■	■		
A	G	E	D	■	T	A	G	A	L	O	G	■		
N	O	R	■	M	O	S	E	S	■	B	A	A		
■	G	A	G	A	R	I	N	■	C	O	G	S		
■	■	■	R	A	M	S	■	W	R	E	A	K		
R	E	G	I	M	E	■	O	H	O	■	■	■		
I	D	O	L	■	N	A	G	A	S	A	K	I		
G	I	R	L	■	T	R	E	M	B	L	E	D		
S	T	Y	E	■	S	E	E	■	Y	E	N	S		

Sudoku

				8		2	9	7
		4						3
	5				6		1	
			5			6		
8	6		7		2		5	1
		1			8			
	9		3				2	
6						7		
3	4	2		5				

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Monday's answer ▶

4	1	8	6	2	3	5	9	7
6	5	2	1	7	9	4	3	8
9	7	3	8	4	5	1	2	6
3	4	6	9	1	2	7	8	5
2	8	5	7	6	4	3	1	9
7	9	1	5	3	8	2	6	4
8	2	9	3	5	7	6	4	1
5	6	4	2	8	1	9	7	3
1	3	7	4	9	6	8	5	2

Send a KISS

You can now post your kiss, and read even more kisses, at metronews.ca/kiss.

Meaghan
You make me happy everyday, I am lucky to have you in my life. I love you more everyday and want to spend rest of my life with you xoxoxoxoxoxo
AJ

Furnace Man
You make me laugh. You melt my heart. I've got the hots for you. Now get over here and kiss me.
ICE QUEEN

R-my first love
Hi, Just wanted to say I love you and always will. Even if things didn't work out as planned, you will always be my first love and no one will be able to replace that! I will think of you every day and hope that you will not forget what we shared together...I will love you always and I truly wish you the best..thanks for 6 great years of my life xoxo
S

Today's horoscope

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

♈ Aries March 21-April 20
It's not that you've lost your edge, it's just that you can't be bothered to argue about trivialities.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21
Try not to identify too strongly with one particular point of view today.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21
Someone who has not put nearly as much time and effort into a project will get most of the praise today and, of course, you won't be happy about it.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22 You may be the centre of attention but don't let it turn your head.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23
You have done so many favours for so many people that you have probably lost track of them all, but they have not forgotten and over the next few days others will find ways to repay you.

♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22
Be careful others don't take advantage of your laidback attitude today. You'll care if it costs you money.

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23
Something is confusing you and the more you try to make sense of it the less you understand.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22
If you don't know the answer to something then ask someone who does.

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 Take your time today and try to avoid situations where you don't have full control over what is going on around you.

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20
The more you reach out the more love you'll let in.

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18
Focus on your long-term goals and don't allow yourself to be distracted by passing fancies.

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20 Even if you are the kind of Pisces who tends to hold grudges you will be very forgiving today.

SALLY BROMPTON

Caption contest

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You write it!

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